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THE "ROMM" MISHNAH

משניות עם שבע ושלשים הוספות שנוספו על כל המפרשים וההנהגות
שנרדפו בו עד כה. Wilna: ROMM WIDOW AND BROTHERS,
1908-9. 13 voll. 2°.

THE famous publishing house of Romm at Wilna, the publishers of the well known standard editions of the Babylonian Talmud, the Midrash Rabba, and many other works, has just finished the edition of a Mishnah to which I would like to draw attention. The edition was started in 1887 by Z. N. Eisenstadt, but was interrupted after the first and the sixth order of the Mishnah had appeared. Now after twenty-two years the Romms have taken up the plan again on a somewhat enlarged scale and carried it through successfully. To the parts that had appeared before and were reprinted from the plates some more commentaries have been added at the end of the parts. The great value of the new edition consists in the correct text of the commentaries, in the valuable commentary of Solomon 'Adeni and that of R. Isaiah Berlin published here for the first time, and in the variations to the text of the Mishnah, besides the numerous other commentaries and glosses that are given on the margin and at the end of the parts.

The text of the Mishnah and the commentaries of R. Obadiah of Bertinoro and R. Yom Tob Lipman Heller are reprinted from the two earliest editions of the latter which combined both commentaries and appeared during Heller's lifetime (Prague 1617; Cracow 1644). Better readings from the first edition of the Bertinoro (Venice 1548) are also given. Such a reprint of an older edition in any other branch of learning would mean a great step backward. But in Hebrew books, curiously enough, this procedure marks a progress in so far as the numerous misprints of the last three centuries and the various efforts, mostly vain, to mend them are eliminated by this method. In the commentary of R. Israel Lipschütz the simple explanations are separated from the longer discussions exactly in the manner followed by the author in his longer commentary on *Toharot* which appears here for the first time. R. Isaiah Berlin's commentary on *Zeraim* and

Moed are taken from an Oxford MS. and, like all the works of this early critic, convey valuable information. I cannot enumerate here the many commentaries and glosses that are given in this Mishnah besides those found in the other modern editions, though several of them are of great interest. From the (34) larger printed commentaries that could not be included in this edition, excerpts and selections have been specially prepared by the editors.

The most important of the new additions is the commentary of R. Solomon 'Adeni, מלאכת שלמה, which is published here from a MS. of 800 folio leaves. Solomon ben Joshua b. Halfon 'Adeni of Sana'a (Yemen) had emigrated to Palestine and lived in Jerusalem, Safed, and Hebron. A pupil of that famous compiler of Talmud commentaries, R. Bezalel Ashkenazi, he collected in his bulky work much valuable material for the study of the Mishnah. He utilized the text of the Mishnah that R. Joseph Ashkenazi had established after collation of old MSS. (see D. Kaufmann, *MGWJ.*, 1898, 38 ff.) and other sources to correct the edition of Venice 1548 that served 'Adeni as a basis. He excerpted many unedited works a few of which have been printed lately; Sirillo's commentary on the Palestinian Talmud, Meiri on *Eduyot*, and the notes of R. Sulaiman ibn אוחנא, whose very valuable comments on the *Sifre* were published in 1866, may be mentioned from the long list which the author gives in his introduction. He incorporated into his work some books in full. The commentary of R. Abraham b. David on *Kinnim* with the criticism of R. Zerahiah ha-Levi, here called סלע החלוקות (comp. *REJ.*, LXI 133-4) and R. Asher's commentary have been taken out of 'Adeni's work and printed separately with variants of the former editions. Maimonides' introduction to *Toharot* which, according to Frankel (דרכי המשנה, p. 321), alone would suffice to establish its author's fame, 'Adeni gave in the corrected version of his teacher R. Bezalel Ashkenazi. A cursory comparison with Derenburg's and the ordinary editions shows that R. Bezalel went back to the Arabic original in this as in other cases. So in his כללי התלמוד MS. a unique though unfortunately incomplete copy of which has lately been presented by Judge Sulzberger to the Jewish Theologi-

cal Seminary, he translated excerpts from Saadya's methodological work *דרכי התלמוד*; in his *שטה מקובצת* on Baba ḥamma (ed. Venice 26d) he translated a responsum of R. Dosa; Baba meši'a (ed. Amsterdam, 207a) he gives Hebrew versions of portions of two Arabic works by an otherwise unknown David b. Saadya, the one containing a criticism of the Halakot Gedolot, the other bearing the title *משפטי שבועות*; and f. 17a, 20a, 24a, 47a, 55c, 62c, 74d; 83d, a. o., responsa of R. Joseph Ibn Migash (the latter author is to be added to Steinschneider, *Die arabische Literatur der Juden*). R. Bezalel, it may be added, informs us elsewhere (*Responsa*, No. 1) that he had in his possession very old MSS. of Maimonides' commentary on the Mishnah. These corrections of R. Bezalel are mostly marked by an old hand in a copy of the first Venice edition of Seder Toharot with Maimonides' commentary in the New York Seminary. The corrections which reach up to the middle of Makshirim and are evidently based on the Arabic original probably are due to R. Bezalel Ashkenazi. In the MS. of 'Adeni's work which I very cursorily examined in Berlin, Maimonides' commentary on Kelim is also included in R. Bezalel's corrected version, but like the copious excerpts from Bertinoro's commentary the editors evidently omitted it. To Maimonides' introduction 'Adeni added a short synopsis by R. Judah b. Moses Albutini (comp. Frumkin, *אבן שמואל*, p. 54; his name should be added to Steinschneider's list of Arabic names, *JQR.*, X, 134), from a MS. of 1501, probably holograph, as this author in 1519 in Jerusalem began a commentary, *יסוד התורה*, on a part of Maimonides' book. The author's own copy of this book which was seen by Azulai now forms part of the Sulzberger-Collection of the Jewish Theological Seminary. 'Adeni's commentary is not only valuable for his excerpts but also gives a very exhaustive discussion of every point. In the parts that appeared first it is printed on the same page with the text, in the other volumes it is put at the end and printed continuously. It is interesting to observe that 'Adeni at the end of the preface draws attention to the curious coincidence that two scholars, himself at Hebron and Lipman Heller in Germany, had been simultaneously occupied in compiling critical comments on the Mishnah.

Besides the variants and readings to the Mishnah contained in this Commentary of 'Adeni, the editors have given a good deal more of material which goes towards establishing the text of this fundamental work of Talmudic literature. In the volumes that were printed in 1887 only the variants of the Naples edition were added under the text, in the other volumes a much fuller apparatus is given on the margin. Here Lowe's edition of the Cambridge Mishnah, the first editions of both Talmudim and of Alfasi, and Rabinovicz' *Variae Lectiones* were utilized for a careful collation which is the more welcome, as many of the books are only found in libraries of first ranks. These collations ought to have been added to the first parts too.

Considering the great care that has been taken to make this edition as complete as possible, it is quite remarkable that the best commentary, that of Maimonides, as well as the older commentaries, like those of Simson of Sens and R. Isaac of Siponte, have been omitted, seemingly because they are printed in the Talmud editions. This, however, does not appear to be a satisfactory reason for their exclusion. It also would have been preferable if the text of the Mishnah had been printed from the Naples edition of 1492, and the Bertinoro from that of Venice 1545. Apart from this, however, there can be no doubt that the new Mishnah will soon establish itself as the standard edition and will be welcomed by every scholar for the valuable material it furnishes towards establishing as well as explaining the text of the Mishnah.

P. S.—While the above was going through the press I found that Solomon bar Joshua 'Adeni whose invaluable Commentary on the Mishnah was discussed above, is also the copyist and in a certain sense the redactor of his master's Rabbi Bezalel Ashkenazi's "Shiṭṭah Meḳubbešet" on "Seder Ḳodashim, Nedarim and Nazir." The manuscript in the possession of the bookseller Schlesinger of Vienna was described by Jellinek in the first edition of his *קונטרס חמוכיר*, Vienna 1877, p. 16 f. Comp. also Epstein in *Steinschneider Festschrift*, pp. 141-143, where the different texts of the Shiṭṭah to Ḳodashim are discussed. The Amsterdam bookseller, Frederik Muller, in 1870, offered several treatises of Seder Ḳodashim in the first Bomberg edition with MS. notes,

which according to his description can be nothing else but the original or a copy of Rabbi Bezalel's work, though he did not recognize it. See his *4^e Bulletin*, p. 61, No. 916.

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